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Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

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6359th meeting

Thursday, 15 July 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. Çorman
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/335)

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Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2010/335)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Queta (Guinea-Bissau) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Adelino Mano Queta.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Mutaboba to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2010/335, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luisa Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mutaboba.

Mr. Mutaboba: It is a great privilege for me to present to the Security Council the second report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/335) on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). I also appreciate the opportunity to exchange views on the most recent developments in Guinea-Bissau.

The latest report of the Secretary-General before the Council focuses on the political and security situation leading up to and following the events of 1 April, when troops acting under the orders of the then Deputy Chief of General Staff took control of the armed forces headquarters, detained the Chief of General Staff and briefly detained the Prime Minister. On the same day, military armed elements forced their way into the United Nations premises in Bissau to demand the immediate release of the former Navy Chief of Staff, Bubo Na Tchuto, who left the building after signing a statement that he was leaving voluntarily and peacefully. The report also focuses on the efforts of international stakeholders in the country and in the subregion to impress upon national authorities the need to restore and respect constitutional order and enhance control of legitimate civilian institutions over the defence and security forces of the country.

In my last presentation to this Council (see S/PV.6281), I emphasized the significance of this year as a turning point for sustaining progress in Guinea-Bissau, building on the good economic performance and reformist commitment of the Government and the leadership of the armed forces at that time, and for advancing major reforms for the long-term stability of the country. The 1 April events, which constituted a serious breach of constitutional order, as well as defiance of the international community with the violation of the United Nations premises in Bissau, have underlined the extreme fragility of the peacebuilding process and its vulnerability to reversals. Key challenges and obstacles to stability in Guinea-Bissau are well known, including the weakness of State institutions, the insubordination of the armed forces to the civilian leadership, critical development gaps, and the illicit drug trafficking and organized crime that have been affecting the whole subregion. Allow me at this stage to highlight major developments since the issuance of the report before the Council.

On 24 June, Prime Minister Gomes Júnior chaired a session of the Council of Ministers which considered a proposal submitted by the Ministry of Defence regarding the nomination of the new Chief of General Staff of the armed forces. The communiqué issued by the Council of Ministers urged the President to appoint a new Chief of General Staff without delay and recommended that the President proceed with the release of the former Chief of General Staff, Vice Admiral Zamora Induta, who to this day is being held in detention at Mansoa barracks.

On 25 June, Prime Minister Gomes Júnior met President Malam Bacai Sanha, and speaking to the press after the meeting, confirmed that he and the President were in agreement on the issue of the military leadership. Subsequently, on that same day, President Sanha issued a presidential decree dismissing Vice Admiral José Zamora Induta from his position as Chief of General Staff, and appointing Major General António N'djai as the new Chief of General Staff of the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau. Major General N'djai was formally sworn in on 29 June and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. President Sanha stressed that the decision to appoint General N'djai was a sovereign decision not taken under coercion, and called on the new military chief to ensure respect for the civilian authorities.

These recent developments are an indication that civilian authorities in Guinea-Bissau are yet to exercise full control over the armed forces. The appointment of Lieutenant General N'djai was criticized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the African Union and the United States Government, among other partners, given his lead role in the 1 April military insurrection. In an immediate reaction, a meeting of ECOWAS Chiefs of Defence Staff scheduled to take place in Bissau on 28 and 29 June was called off by the ECOWAS Commission. Subsequently, consultations were held at the margins of the ECOWAS Summit of Heads of State and Government, which took place in Sal, Cape Verde, from 1 to 3 July. However, these consultations were held without the authorities of Guinea-Bissau, who decided not to attend the informal meeting convened on 3 July. During the informal meeting, attended by the Foreign Ministers of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde and Portugal, as well as representatives from ECOWAS, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and myself, on behalf of the United Nations, a consensus was reached on the need to continue to advance key reforms in Guinea-Bissau, and in particular a more robust security sector reform programme, as a first step towards strengthening civilian oversight of the security institutions and creating professional and effective security forces capable of confronting the severe internal and external challenges the country now faces.

Let me, in this context, update members of the Security Council on recent developments in the area of security sector reform (SSR). As announced at my last briefing to the Security Council in March, an international sensitization conference on security sector reform was held on 23 and 24 June in Bissau. The conference was opened by President Malam Bacai Sanha and closed by Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior, who also attended the opening ceremony. It was co-organized by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and UNIOGBIS, and attended by the main national and international actors involved in the SSR process in Guinea-Bissau, including ECOWAS, bilateral partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The conference gave an opportunity to international partners, including ECOWAS and the United Nations, to remind national authorities that, beyond their renewed political commitment to pursuing key reforms, some prerequisites set by international partners had to be addressed to sustain the support of the international

community. It is important to continue to push for these prerequisites to be met, in particular the immediate release of former Chief of General Staff, Vice Admiral Induta.

With respect to the Commission of Inquiry into the March 2009 assassinations of President Vieira and Chief of General Staff Tagme Na Waie, the Prosecutor General informed me that the investigation is nearing completion and that he needed to meet witnesses who are abroad, including the widow of the late President. He requested in that regard financial assistance and international expertise, including from Brazil and the European Union, so as to conclude the investigations. Together with other international partners on the ground, we have conveyed to the national authorities that granting the assistance requested by the Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General would require that guarantees of the fairness and credibility of the investigations conducted so far be obtained first, simply because we do not want to be a rubber stamp for what has been done.

I would also like to highlight recent progress made on the socio-economic front. From 17 to 25 June, a mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited Bissau and expressed satisfaction at the economic performance through May and the good progress made in meeting structural benchmarks established for mid-June. It also indicated that if performance remained at current levels, the country could reach the completion point for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative in late 2010. The IMF will be sending a mission in September to review Guinea-Bissau's economic performance in the first half of the year under the Extended Credit Facility. While these developments are encouraging, economic performance depends on political stability, and we must therefore make sure that international assistance on the socio-economic front is fully consistent with our efforts on the political and security issues.

The challenges in Guinea-Bissau are significant, but not insurmountable if addressed without delay. The status quo would certainly allow the challenges, not to mention the spillover effect on the entire subregion, to grow bigger. While the onus is clearly on the national authorities to be mindful of these challenges and to address them urgently, the international community can resort to a firmer posture to ensure that critical steps are taken that will help stabilize the country. What is needed at this stage is the firm and genuine commitment of the national authorities to continuing with security sector and other reforms, more efficient strategies, leaders respectful of constitutional order and the rule of law, as well as a practical and time-bound road map developed by national stakeholders for the implementation of these strategies.

We also need more robust international action in addressing key challenges such as drug trafficking and organized crime. Such actions should be combined with a firm posture vis-à-vis national authorities, especially the leadership of the armed forces, to ensure their understanding of the need to stay the course of the reform process based upon internationally accepted standards.

The President: I thank Mr. Mutaboba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti.

Mrs. Viotti: I thank you, Madam President, for inviting me to brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Adelino Mano Queta. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, for his remarks and for his work at the helm of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

Since I last briefed the Council (see S/PV.6281), a number of developments have affected the peace consolidation process in Guinea-Bissau and the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in that country. I refer, in particular, to the acts perpetrated by members of the military on 1 April, which brought further challenges to the prevalence of civilian rule in Guinea-Bissau.

The members of the Guinea-Bissau configuration met on 26 April to discuss the situation on the ground. It was agreed that I should send a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, which I have done. The letter expressed concern with the situation created after the events of 1 April and regretted that they took place at a time when Guinea-Bissau was making important progress in many domains. It noted the importance of the Government and the military leadership working together to strengthen State institutions, promote economic development, uphold the rule of law, fight

impunity and combat drug trafficking and organized crime. It also called on the civilian and military authorities to engage in genuine national dialogue.

The Peacebuilding Commission emphasized that the April events illustrated the centrality of security sector reform and referred to the high-level event that was being planned before the events of 1 April to mobilize resources to establish a pension fund for the military. It also noted that successful security sector reform efforts would require the appointment of new military leadership in accordance with the letter and spirit of the constitutional framework. It further stressed the priority attached by the Peacebuilding Commission to the need for the former Chief of General Staff of the armed forces and other officers arrested in April to be either released or legally prosecuted.

In his response to the Peacebuilding Commission, Foreign Minister Mano Queta reiterated his Government's commitment to the peacebuilding process and the implementation of critical reforms, including the reform of the security sector. He informed us that the Government had taken action to restore constitutional order and the normal functioning of State institutions. Minister Mano Queta also expressed the expectation that the planned security sector reform high-level event would strengthen the Government's relations with the Peacebuilding Commission and generate support for urgent projects.

The Peacebuilding Commission remains firmly committed to supporting Guinea-Bissau in its peace consolidation efforts. We so stated in the aforementioned letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and would like to reiterate it now. Our engagement is based on the principle of mutual accountability and aims at consolidating democratic institutions, without which peace and stability will always be fragile.

The April events reflected a sad pattern of addressing political disputes by force and therefore should be strongly condemned. Events such as these send a wrong message of disrespect for the rule of law. They represent a setback to the peace consolidation process and tend to discourage partners from deepening their engagement with the country. Instead, what should be required at this stage is a message of strong commitment to the rule of law. The population needs to perceive Government institutions as legitimate bodies that work within a framework of democracy and constitutional order.

In this regard, a solution to the Zamora Induta case is indispensable to boosting the peacebuilding process in the country. We reiterate the need for the former Chief of General Staff and other detained officers to be either released or legally prosecuted with full respect for due process.

In spite of the current challenges, it is necessary to find ways to maintain the international engagement with Guinea-Bissau. It is imperative to help Bissau Guineans to consolidate their institutions as a means of addressing the root causes of instability.

Security sector reform remains a critical peacebuilding priority. Measures to train the security and military forces and strengthen professionalism are indispensable. It goes without saying, however, that any successful security sector reform strategy in Guinea-Bissau must rely on cooperation and dialogue between the international community and national interlocutors who have the full support of the Government and international partners alike. The subordination of the military to civilian rule is also an essential ingredient of such a collective endeavour. The Secretary-General has proposed, in this regard, ways to strengthen the security of civilian authorities.

Another issue of grave concern to the members of the Peacebuilding Commission is drug trafficking. An effective fight against illegal drugs requires functioning State institutions, especially in the areas of justice and security, as well as firm political will. The latter is key to securing the international assistance necessary for Guinea-Bissau to increase its national capacity in this domain.

We welcome the recent statement by President Malam Bacai Sanha in which he urged the armed forces to submit to civilian rule. He also highlighted the importance of a security sector reform process led by the State and of a relentless fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.

These efforts must be reinforced by a regional approach. We therefore emphasize the important role played by the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Also, as individual Governments and collectively, we must all do more and better to support implementation of the ECOWAS regional action plan and the West Africa

Coast Initiative. These are all necessary undertakings to strengthen the capacity of the Bissau Guinean police forces in their fight against drug trafficking.

International cooperation efforts to consolidate peace should not rest solely upon security-related aspects. In order for peace to take hold, the foundations for social and economic development must be strengthened. We need to support capacity-building and help the country revitalize its economy. At the end of the day, it is the revitalization of the economy and the creation of job opportunities that will generate the resources to provide basic services to the population and those necessary for the State to function in a sustainable manner.

In Guinea-Bissau, as everywhere else, peacebuilding will succeed if society and its leaders so wish and if, as a country, they are ready to make the difficult decisions needed to consolidate stability and lay the foundations for prosperity.

The events of 1 April, despite their worrisome consequences, reflected one positive aspect — the significant support shown by the population for the country's democratic institutions. This is a clear indication that Bissau Guineans are a peaceful people who cherish the value of democracy and are eager to reap the long-awaited dividends of peace. The reconciliation forum to be organized by the National Assembly in January 2011 will be a good opportunity to further engage the population in a frank discussion of the country's future. We hope that it will contribute to identifying ways and means to break the pattern of settling disputes through violent means.

The President: I thank Mrs. Viotti for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. Adelino Mano Queta.

Mr. Queta (Guinea-Bissau) *(spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation)*: Allow me, Madam President, to congratulate you on behalf of my Government on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. Your country, Nigeria, has always played a decisive role in the resolution of conflicts on our continent, in particular in the West African subregion in the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We are convinced that the Security Council will review the situation in Guinea-Bissau with particular attention under your presidency and contribute to the search for peace and stability in our country.

Allow me, on behalf of my Government, to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Guinea-Bissau (S/2010/335). We note with particular attention the observations contained in the report.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Joseph Mutaboba, for his tireless dedication and contribution to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. His presentation illustrates the complexity of the situation and the seriousness of the pressing problems facing Guinea-Bissau. The current situation clearly results from various factors that have contributed negatively to the persistent cyclical crises, which we regret. Such recurrent crises have placed Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of the Security Council for many years. Time is of the essence and we Guineans must assume our responsibilities, turn the page once and for all and set our country on the path to sustainable peace and stability.

We express our gratitude to Ambassador Viotti for her presentation of the work of the Guinea-Bissau country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, which she has led with great dedication and skill. We highly appreciate the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission, which have greatly contributed to creating better conditions for dialogue among Guineans aimed at restoring political stability in my country.

My presence at this meeting of the Security Council is a testimony to the importance my Government accords to the Council's deliberations and reflects its determination to work tirelessly to achieve peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. The challenges are enormous and the means to tackle them scarce. Alone, Guinea-Bissau will not be able to overcome the current situation. We are at a crucial turning point. The aspirations and legitimate expectations of our people must not continue to be compromised, and we are fully aware of that.

The progress in consolidating democracy and the rule of law must not be permanently stalled. The recent tragic developments in our country, in particular the assassinations of the President of the Republic, the Army Chief of General Staff and other high-ranking

officials have profoundly affected Guinean society and are contrary to our cultural values of dialogue and brotherly coexistence. As recently stated by President of the Republic Malam Bacai Sanha at a meeting of the defence corps, the events of 1 April are unacceptable and must not be repeated.

The authorities of my country are of the view that the reform of the defence and security sectors is fundamental and must not be postponed. We are fully conscious of the fact that Guinea-Bissau needs a republican and modern army dedicated to the important role of consolidating the rule of law. The recent conference on the reform of the defence and security sectors, held in June in Bissau, took place in an environment of candour and cordiality and demonstrated the resolve of the military to undertake these reforms. I take this opportunity to thank the members of the international community — in particular our brothers from ECOWAS, the European Union, Portugal and Brazil — for their tireless support for our country in this process.

Significant steps have already been taken and we must now persevere in the same spirit of cooperation and determination. If these security and defence reforms are to take place, the Government of Guinea-Bissau must enjoy the support of the international community in the establishment of a pension fund. In this regard, the convening of a high-level meeting on security sector reform and a round table with our development partners is essential to the future of our country.

We reaffirm the determination of our Government to fight resolutely against drug trafficking in our country and the subregion, of course with the technical and legal assistance of our partners.

In spite of the persistent crises that have shaken our country in recent times, Guinea-Bissau should not be considered a lost cause. We understand the legitimate concerns and questions of the international community, but on behalf of my country I can assure the Council that the authorities of my country are firmly committed to consolidating democracy and the rule of law, fighting impunity and creating an environment conducive to stability and the well-being of our people. We count on the international community's solidarity and support.

The President: I thank Minister Queta for his statement.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.